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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

5   1.   A method in a data processing system for processing
a physical transaction, the method comprising the data
processing system implemented steps of:
        receiving data structures containing information
about the physical transactions from a plurality entities
10   performing the physical transactions, wherein the data
structures include information about the physical
transactions;
        updating a database of physical transactions in
response to receiving the data structures to form an
15   updated database; and
        analyzing the update database to generate statistics
about the physical transactions.

2.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:
20   analyzing the statistics to generate projections
about future physical transactions.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the physical
transactions involved automotive services.
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4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the information
includes an item in the physical transaction.

5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the information
30   includes an identification of a vehicle in the
transaction.

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6.   The method of claim 3, wherein the automotive services is at least one of an oil change, a tune up, body work on a vehicle, or an alignment.

5   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of entities are located in different geographic locations.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the data structures are received using one of electronic mail messages, a

10   floppy disc, or CD-ROM.

9.   A method in a data processing system for processing a transaction involving a set of items, the method comprising the data processing system implemented steps

15   of:

identifying a supplier for each item within the set of items in the transaction;

generating an electronic record of the transaction for the set of items; and

20   transmitting the electronic record to each identified supplier.

10.   The method of claim 9, wherein the generating step comprises:

25   creating an electronic record containing only information about items within the set of items for a single identified supplier, wherein each identified supplier receives a different electronic record.

30   11.   The method of claim 9, wherein the supplier is a supplier of automotive items.

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12.   The method of claim 9 further comprising:

transmitting the electronic record to a customer of the transaction.

5   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein the electronic record is transmitted to the customer using at least one of an electronic mail message and a wireless communications link.

10   14.   The method of claim 9, wherein the transaction involves providing an automotive service for a customer.

15.   A method in a data processing system for processing records for physical transactions, the method comprising

15   the data processing system implemented steps of:

receiving a data structure containing information for a physical transaction for the customer; and

updating a set of records within the data processing system using the information in the data structure.

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16.   The method of claim 15, wherein the updating step comprising:

identifying at least one program within the data processing system requiring information from the data

25   structure;

extracting the information from the data structure; and

placing the information into a format used by the at least one program.

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17.   The method of clam 15 further comprising:

projecting future physical transactions using the

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information.

18.   A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

5   a communications unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes as set of instructions; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of

10   instructions to receive data structures containing information about the physical transactions from a plurality entities performing the physical transactions in which wherein the data structures include information about the physical transactions. update a database of

15   physical transactions in response to receiving the data structures to form an updated database, and analyze the update database to generate statistics about the physical transactions.

20   19.   The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the bus system is a single bus.

20.   The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the bus system includes a primary bus and a secondary bus.

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21.   The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the processing unit includes a plurality of processors.

22. The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the

30   communications unit is one of a modem and Ethernet adapter.

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23.   A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a communications unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the

5   memory includes as set of instructions; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system,
wherein the processing unit executes the set of
instructions to identify a supplier for each item within
a set of items in a transaction, generate an electronic

10   record of the transaction for the set of items, and
transmit the electronic record to each identified
supplier.

24.   A data processing system for processing a physical

15   transaction, the data processing system comprising:

receiving means for receiving data structures
containing information about the physical transactions
from a plurality entities performing the physical
transactions, wherein the data structures include

20   information about the physical transactions;

updating means for updating a database of physical
transactions in response to receiving the data structures
to form an updated database; and

analyzing means for analyzing the update database to

25   generate statistics about the physical transactions.

25.   The data processing system of claim 24 wherein the
analyzing means is a first analyzing means further
comprising:

30   second analyzing means for analyzing the statistics
to generate projections about future physical
transactions.

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26.   The data processing system of claim 24, wherein the physical transactions involved automotive services.

5   27.   The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the information includes an item in the physical transaction.

28.   The data processing system of claim 27, wherein the information includes an identification of a vehicle in

10   the transaction.

29.   The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the automotive services is at least one of an oil change, a tune up, body work on a vehicle, or an alignment.

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30.   The data processing system of claim 24, wherein the plurality of entities are located in different geographic locations.

20   31.   The data processing system of claim 24, wherein the data structures are received using one of electronic mail messages, a floppy disc, or CD-ROM.

32.   A data processing system for processing a

25   transaction involving a set of items, the data processing system comprising:

identifying means for identifying a supplier for each item within the set of items in the transaction;

generating means for generating an electronic record

30   of the transaction for the set of items; and

transmitting means for transmitting the electronic record to each identified supplier.

33.   The data processing system of claim 32, wherein the generating step comprises:

     creating means for creating an electronic record
5 containing only information about items within the set of items for a single identified supplier, wherein each identified supplier receives a different electronic record.

10 34.   The data processing system of claim 32, wherein the supplier is a supplier of automotive items.

35.   The data processing system of claim 32 further comprising:
15   transmitting means for transmitting the electronic record to a customer of the transaction.

36.   The data processing system of claim 32, wherein the electronic record is transmitted to the customer using at
20 least one of an electronic mail message and a wireless communications link.

37.   The data processing system of claim 32, wherein the transaction involves providing an automotive service for
25 a customer.

38.   A data processing system for processing records for physical transactions, the data processing system comprising:
30   receiving means for receiving a data structure containing information for a physical transaction for the customer; and

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updating means for updating a set of records within the data processing system using the information in the data structure.

5   39.   The data processing system of claim 38, wherein the updating means comprising:

identifying means for identifying at least one program within the data processing system requiring information from the data structure;

10   extracting means for extracting the information from the data structure; and

placing means for placing the information into a format used by the at least one program.

15   40.   The data processing system of claim 38 further comprising:

projecting means for projecting future physical transactions using the information.

20   41.   A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in processing a physical transaction, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for receiving data structures containing information about the physical transactions

25   from a plurality entities performing the physical transactions, wherein the data structures include information about the physical transactions;

second instructions for updating a database of physical transactions in response to receiving the data

30   structures to form an updated database; and

third instructions for analyzing the update database to generate statistics about the physical transactions.

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42.   A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in processing a transaction involving a set of items, the computer program product comprising:

5   first instructions for identifying a supplier for each item within the set of items in the transaction;

second instructions for generating an electronic record of the transaction for the set of items; and

third instructions for transmitting the electronic

10   record to each identified supplier.

43.   A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in processing records for physical transactions, the computer program product comprising:

15   first instructions for receiving a data structure containing information for a physical transaction for the customer; and

second instructions for updating a set of records within the data processing system using the information

20   in the data structure.